THE UNION ARMY.

A MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE.

[Original.]

Like some stupendous elm tree
The Union army stands;
Its branches wave o'er many a grave—
The graves that link two lands.
It spreadeth North, it spreadeth South,
It spreadeth East and West;
It hangs o'er the cannon's silent mouth,
Where a bird might build her nest.

But the old limbs of this monarch
Are dropping day by day;
By battles scarred, and by Time's scythe marred,
They are falling fast away.
The boughs that bore us the fruit of peace,
That sheltered us thro' war's night,
From the grand old tree are breaking free
And dying in our sight.

We know there are strong young branches,
All full of the sap of life,
But each old bough that is dropping now
Grew dear thro' a nation's strife.
We feel new pity, and love and pride
For the loyal boys in blue,
As the ranks close in and the lines grow thin,
And graves crowd fast on our view.

Thrice beautiful and sacred
Be this Memorial Day,
When the warriors true, who wore the blue,
Are all of them wearing the gray.
Wearing the gray in their whitened locks,
As with steady, martial tread
They follow the ranks on mystic banks
And go marching down to the dead.

Scatter the floral tributes
Over the thickening graves.
On the sun-kissed air, unstained and fair,
Our splendid banner waves.
Freedom grows well in our country's soil,
Behold how it blooms and thrives.
But we must not forget that its roots were wet
With the blood of a million lives.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

MERIDEN, Ct., May 27.

THE LONE GRAVE OF THE SHENANDOAH.

[An original story taken from the Field Book of Donn Piatt.]

The old stone tavern known through generations as the Indian Queen, that stands on a turn of the road down the mountains from Sherryville to M——, of the Shenandoah Valley, enjoys a landscape a castle might be proud of. That this is the Indian Queen runs on tradition and general consent, for the old-fashioned signboard that creaks in front lost long since the work of art that pictured forth the name. Nothing remained on the one side but a dim crown of feathers, nearly obliterated, and two staring eyes on the other, that, put together by the curious observer, failed to make up that imaginary creature known to tradition and dime novels as Her Majesty Queen Pocahontas.

Virginia's little romance of that ilk is about as dim as the signboard. Pocahontas did live and was the daughter of a chief. But all else is the fringe-work of fancy, that, like the sign, would have long since faded out but for a useful purpose the romance serves, and that is, the manner in which our loved ancestors had of accounting for—well, say brunettes that appeared from time to time among the noble Virginians. They were considered the descendants of Pocahontas.

To return, however, to my story: The view from the rude porch of the inn is exceedingly beautiful, for it contains one of the loveliest portions of that lovely valley. The green meadows and rich fields, with groves and gleams of water, dotted by white farm houses half hid in orchards, were all framed in by mountains, the summits of which seemed to melt into the blue of heaven, leaving the eye in doubt as to where the rounded rocky or wooded tops ended and the clouds began. The sulphury smoke of battle had obscured these fields, and the mountains had echoed back the mouthing cannon of combatants, but at the time our little romance opens no harm had been done to the valley itself. Armies had marched, fought and retreated—generally, up to that time, the dear old flag had hurried ingloriously out of the row—but no great injury had come to the work of the farmer or the beauty of nature.

The summer sun was sinking in the lazy west, with distant rumblings of artillery telling of a far off combat, as a girl, some twenty years of age, sat in a rocking chair, on the wooden porch of the tavern, rocking softly to and fro and gazing dreamily upon the view before her. Her appearance was such as to attract attention. In dress, bearing and expression there was a refinement that indicated one city bred, rather than of rural local origin. She was exceedingly attractive, with a claim to beauty that came under the head of handsome rather than pretty. Her face, at rest, indicated more force of character than that which ordinarily falls to the sweeter sex. The perfect oval ended in a pronounced chin, while the slight aquiline line of her nose made that chin aggressive. But for the full red lips of the perfect mouth, and large dreamy eyes, the pale face would have been too severe to excite other than a feeling of admiration.

The expression depicted from time to time, as the feelings changed, had a wider range than is usual to such a cast of countenance. As her eyes wandered over the beautiful view her face was one to admire. When a little three-year-old daughter of the stone tavern toddled to her and rested its little head upon her knee, the long silken fringes of her tender eyes fell upon it as her slender hands stroked its curly locks—and her face was one to love. Afterward when she gazed at a brigade of Union soldiers pitching their tents on the meadows below, scorn and hate gave her a face to fear.

A movement below made her start, as if to leave her chair. Then, after half rising, she settled back and began again the monotonous rocking. A cavalcade of officers was riding up the road, as if coming to the Indian Queen.

At the head of this little escort rode a stout, middle aged gentleman, in the uniform of a brigadier general of the northern army. Mounted on a superb horse, he sat with the ease of an experienced rider, his high rounded shoulders holding a grim, resolute head, that under other than a military hat would have been repulsive in its severity. There was a face not to be trifled with, as the historic annals of war and diplomacy have put to record.

Halting in front of the tavern, the officers dismounted, and as the orderlies led the horses to the stable, they ascended the steps, and gaining the porch instinctively lifted their hats to the girl before them. She barely recognized the salutation, then continued her rocking, as if their politeness and presence were alike indifferent to her.

A grim change in the general's face left one in doubt whether he was suffering from a toothache or indulging in a smile.

On the landlord making his appearance the chief gave his orders. They were for supper for himself and staff, one room for the night and quarters for a corporal's guard. While the supper was being prepared the general sat in a split-bottomed arm chair, near our heroine, while the members of his staff, weary of a long day's ride, stretched themselves upon the sod under the trees.

"How many a vanished hour and day
Have sunlight o'er me shed,"

since last I parted from that gallant band of good fellows a loved general held together during the four years of a terrible conflict. I can see them now. I see the tall, slender, volatile Chesnutt, gay as a lark and brave as a lion. Esterhaze, quiet, grave, yet ever alert to duty. Comb, slender and awkward, but possessed of the keenest sense of humor, as ready to jest under fire as in the camp. Then came old Grenville, called old because he was so solemn. It would take a surgical instrument to get a joke in his head, and then another to get it out. And last, but not least, for he is the hero of my little romance, Bob Ellersly, young, handsome and liable to love and debt.

Two of these met violent deaths, and the rest are scattered world-wide apart. I send them greeting.

"I say, Bob," cried Chestnutt to the aide, as he rested his head on his elbows and kicked his toes into the grass, "rather handsome girl that up there."

"The old man seems to have discovered that," Bob responded. "See him doing the sweet on her, will you."

"Well, he is." Comb chipped in, "but he isn't making much headway, I gather from the expression on her lovely countenance."

The General was doing the suave polite, for which he was famous, and getting little in return but crisp monosyllables.

It does not require much time to prepare a meal in Virginia. Ham and eggs, with hot biscuits, make the substantials, while sticky, indigestible sweets, called preserves, form the entrees. The General and staff were soon called to table, and ate with the hearty relish of hungry men. After the supper had been disposed of the General called his aide, Bob Ellersly, to one side and said:

"I have a rather pleasant duty for you, Bob."

"All right, General, the pleasanter the better."

"It is one, Lieutenant," continued the commander, "of extreme delicacy, and I trust to your tact to carry it to a successful issue. Now, don't let any of your boyish impulses make you blunder. You see that young lady on the porch?"

"I believe I noticed her."

"Well, for the next ten days, or until further orders, you must not permit her to get out of your sight. You must do this delicately, for she is the niece of the most prominent and important loyalist of Baltimore. It will not do to offend her, for the whole affair may be a mistake after all."

"What is the affair, General?"

"Simply this: the secretary of war writes me that all the papers concerning the coming campaign in Virginia were stolen from the department and traced to Clara Willis, of Baltimore. Miss Clara has since disappeared, but there is every reason to believe that she is somewhere in the Shenandoah valley trying to communicate with the enemy. This is the girl, Bob, I am satisfied. I worried enough out of the landlord to convince me I am right. Put a guard about the house so no one can enter or leave without your permission, and keep your eye on her."

"But, General, this is difficult. If I am not to make her a prisoner, how am I to act?"

"Make love to her, Bob," said his commander, with a twinkle in his eye. "Sacrifice yourself on the altar of your country. She is a woman, and a devilish pretty one, and, therefore, may be wooed; she is a woman, and, therefore, may be won." So saying the brigadier ordered horses, and Bob heard them rattling off in the moonlight, leaving him to execute his diplomatic mission.

Calling Corporal Bang, Bob directed him to place a guard in front of the house, and another in the rear, with orders to permit no one to enter or leave, man, woman or child, without his (the Lieutenant's) orders.

"Do you know, Corporal, what has become of the young lady who was seated on the porch before supper?"

"She skooted up stairs, Lieutenant, and every swish of her petticoats had a secesh cuss in it. She lit up the corner room, I calculate."

"Very well; you have your orders."

"All right, Lieutenant."

Bob Ellersly seated himself in the vacated arm chair and smoked his briar wood pipe in the moonlight, revolving over and over in his mind the strange duty imposed upon him. He was interested, and yet did not like the business. Young, ardent and ambitious, he thought of his comrades riding off to glory, while he remained behind to circumvent a woman. Bouncing from his chair, he walked the rough boards of the old porch impatiently. Suddenly he descended the steps and stood under the trees, gazing up at that corner of the room occupied by the enemy. Country taverns are not graced with curtains, but something of the sort had been improvised for this apartment, and he could only see a shadow of the inmate, passing and repassing, as if she, too, was restless and impatient.

As he stood leaning against a tree in the moonlight he presented as handsome a figure as one would care to see. The broad shoulders, swung over slender hips, held over them a head in which youth and manhood contended for the mastery. His face was boyish when at rest, but when animated he seemed to take on years in the way of expression which, added to his soldierly bearing, impressed his comrades as one capable of any duty. Left an orphan at an early age, with a small property, on which he had been educated, he stood alone in the world. He had not, he said, a relation that he knew of on earth. "So much the better," grunted cynical Comb; "if you have poor relations you fear they will want to borrow your money, or get hung; if you have rich ones they are sure to get into congress, or the penitentiary, and worry the life out of you. Relations are nuisances."

The next morning Ellersly informed Bang in the presence of the landlord that they had been left to look after the forwarding of important dispatches from the front, and with an orderly rode to M——. He was scarcely out of sight before an ancient gig, that wabbled in the wheels and groaned in the body, as if afflicted with combined old age and sciatica, was drawn in front by an animated hat-rack for a horse. The negro driver stopped at the foot of the steps and our heroine, fully prepared for a jaunt, seated herself by the colored boy. When the horse was turned toward the road the private on guard brought his musket down before the horse's nose and arrested the concern.

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded the girl.

"Can't go, that's all."

"Call your corporal; I want to know the meaning of this outrage."

Corporal Bang stepped to the front.

"What is the reason for this detention?" she continued.

"Them as gives orders has reasons; them as gets orders has bayonets," sententiously responded Bang.

There was no help for it. With flushed cheeks and a firm, set mouth, the girl descended from the vehicle and entered the house. Every step was a protest. The ancient gig was restored to its *maison de santé*, and the hat-rack of a horse to its stall. At noon Ellersly returned, and learned of the attempted escape. After dinner, while smoking his pipe, the suspected girl approached him.

"I attempted to drive out this morning, sir," she said indignantly, "and was arrested by your men. Am I to understand that I am a prisoner?"

"I am very sorry, madam," answered the aide, avoiding the question, "very sorry so rude a thing was done."

"Don't apologize, sir. We know your miserable government makes war on women. You are only a hireling executing its brutal orders. Again I ask you, am I a prisoner?"

"It is really painful to know that you entertain such an idea," patiently continued the officer. "These men execute orders so literally that mistakes like this will occur."

"I am not a prisoner, then?"

"You are at liberty, I assure you, to go where and when you please. To prove to you, however, how unjust you are to us I will add that you shall go as you will and, owing to the unsettled and dangerous condition the country is in, I will furnish you an escort of armed men to see that you go in safety."

"Mr. Lieutenant," she said with scorn, "when I need your services I will ask them."

"Do so, madam, and you will find me ready to serve you." And so they parted.

"An unpleasant beginning for a love affair," murmured Bob, resuming his pipe.

For the next twenty-four hours the Lieutenant saw little of his suspect, and the little he did see was not agreeable. Meeting her by accident on the stairs she not only gave way, but gathered her skirts about her, as if she feared contamination from the touch.

The day after, however, her mood changed. She received him with a bewitching smile, holding out her little hand, saying:

"Mr.——" and she paused.

"Ellersly," he added, lifting his cap.

"Mr. Ellersly, I wish to apologize for my rude talk. I forgot that you were an officer on duty, and what is more, I forgot that I was a lady. Pardon me."

"I have no pardon to ask, madam," said Bob, gallantly. "Reproof is sweeter from some than commendation from others. Now, what can I do for you?"

"We will breakfast together," she said, "and then I will tell you."

At breakfast she poured out his muddy coffee of beans and chickory, and was so very amiable that Bob, young as he was, could not help thinking she was too confoundedly sweet, and he became, in consequence, the more alert and suspicious.

"Now I'll tell you, Lieutenant," she said on the porch, "I am ashamed to confess it, but I have some poor relations in these mountains almost starved by the war."

That is a lie, thought Bob; but he said nothing—only smiled sweetly.

"I wish to communicate with and help them," she continued; "and if you will furnish me with an escort I will make the attempt."

An ambush, thought Bob; but he smiled all the more, and added:

"Why of course I will. I'll do better—I will be your escort myself. Shall we go immediately?"

"Oh, no, there is no need of such haste; to-morrow will do," and they dropped into conversation as natural as if they knew each other for years. Bob was shrewd, but inexperienced. He did not observe the dangerous thread of the talk. While dexterously avoiding all reference to herself she kept on that most fascinating subject to all men, when guided by a pretty woman—himself. It was Othello and Desdemona over again. Only Desdemona led the conversation. Ah, me, if the beguiling sex only knew the full power in their little ears, aided by deep, earnest eyes, none of us would be safe. Bob talked well, at times eloquently, with a golden thread of humor running through all, and he who set out to deceive through love making went to his bed deep in love with the fair charmer.

The day after the expedition was attempted. Alas! it proved a miserable failure. The old horse pulled them slowly to the summit of the mountain, and then descending to the valley beyond stumbled at every step, and at last fell down, breaking the shaft and throwing the fair emissary on his phrenological rump.

When a horse falls down he takes a philosophical view of the situation, and lies still. Old Smooth Tooth lay stretched upon the road, with his shoeless hoofs full extended and his eyes half closed, as if to say, "This is the end; farewell vain world; leave me to the buzzards."

Ellersly lifted his fair companion from the embrace of the moist anatomy. She got up laughing merrily over the mishap, and, leaving the wreck to the man, the two walked back.

"This is too bad," said Bob. "The poor relations will never get relief at this rate. Look here, Miss Clara"—he had her name—"can you ride?"

"Like an Arab," she responded.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Now if I can find a saddle, you shall have my horse Chancellor. He is splendid. I will ride one of the orderly's horses, and so we will penetrate every recess of the mountains."

She was delighted with the arrangement, and an old-fashioned, single-horned side-saddle, hard as the rock of ages, was fished out from the stables. Bob worked long and laboriously in fashioning one of his best blankets to the old affair, to make it more presentable as well as easier, and the rides began.

Chancellor, when first mounted, snorted, reared, lunged as if indignant, but the fair girl kept her seat composedly until the steed quieted down, and then patting his arched neck put herself on friendly terms with the noble animal.

Those rides were long and frequent. Both enjoyed them. She was sweetly confidential in her young escort's life and affairs, and every hour the delicious chain of love bound the poor boy nearer and firmer to his adoration. Small wonder. The young girl was simply superb on horseback. The close-fitting riding dress seemed part of her supple, graceful, engaging form, while the exercise and excitement brought a delicate, shell-tinted rosiness to her cheeks, that seemed the one thing necessary to make her pale face perfect. Bob longed to avow his love, but youth is timid when the precious treasure may be jeopardized by the avowal. He was blinded by his passion, and did not see the game so openly played by the little gambler. She was a true daughter of the south, and her heart was with her poor brothers marching shoeless, with scant raiment, poorly armed, sleeping without shelter, and dying by thousands with desperate bravery for their cause. To have that in her possession that was, as she believed, of vital importance to them, made her desperate. For such a cause, she would play the Judith, and had Bob avowed his love, she was resolved to accept, let the consequences have been what they might to the poor lad.

Oh! the golden glory of those sunny days. They took on a roseate hue, that made the blue summits of the mountains a deeper blue, as if to bound that Eden that lies about each life in the golden glow of youth, when love touches the sweet, tender existence, and the birds sing, and the flowers bloom with voices and odors that penetrate the very soul, never again to pass away. The scene fades, the birds die and the flowers perish, oft in the hard realities of life the blue mountains no longer frame in the fairy paradise, but all the same we cling to it through existence, as our first parents clung to the Garden to which they never could return.

Shakespeare tells us, the course of true love never does run smooth. No, indeed, life's ways are not fitted for the sweet stream. For a little while it murmurs along green meadows, and then, anon, it falls among rocks and rough ways, and oftentimes is dashed over precipices to be dissipated in thin mist, over which arches the rainbow, not, alas! of hope, but memory.

There were some little tricks the lovely girl indulged in that exasperated her lover, who, although blinded by his passion, had not lost sight of his duty. One of these was to stop at some mountain hut, and persist in dismounting and entering the hovel. Bob dismounted also, and would help her to the ground and accompany her to the interior. He kept his eyes and ears alert, and believed that he baffled any designs in this direction.

Another fancy indulged in was to banter the Lieutenant to a race and dart off on Chancellor, at the best of his running pace, and Bob, on his government horse, would follow lumbering after, scarce keeping her in sight, until it suited the girl to check up. Bob remonstrated in vain, and all he could do was to direct the orderly to keep a sharp lookout on either side of the road for anything the girl might drop.

One day Corporal Bang, who happened to be the escort, handed the Lieutenant a letter, tied to a stone, that he had picked up from a gully after one of these races.

"Got a reminder through my chappo, Lieutenant, when I picked that up," and he showed a hole in his hat.

Ellersly looked longingly at the missive. It was directed to a well-known guerrilla of the mountains. Bob would have given a good deal to know its contents. But he quietly handed it, without a word, to the girl. Her face flushed, and somewhat embarrassed she hurried to her room. In a few minutes, however, she returned, letter in hand, with her cheeks yet holding the flush of her excitement.

"Lieutenant Ellersly," she asked, in an even, steady tone, that was forced, "why did you not open this letter?"

"Open your letter?" he asked in turn.

"Yes, open my letter. You are not doing your duty to your government."

"Miss Clara," said the boy proudly, "I tendered my life to my country. I did not include in that my honor. When I am sunk so low as to steal, I cease to be worthy of my commission."

The girl tore open the letter. "Then!" she cried, "learn who I am, and what I am trying to do."

He took the letter and deliberately tore it into fragments, throwing the bits to the wind from the porch. "Miss Clara," he exclaimed excitedly, "I know all I want to know of you. You are doing your duty, as you see it, like a brave-hearted woman, for your side; leave me to do mine, as a gentleman, for mine."

"She looked at him earnestly, half in surprise and half in tenderness, and said in an undertone, as if speaking to herself, "My task grows harder than I thought for." Then she added, offering her hand, "Let us be as kind to each other as we can."

The day after this strange interview she insisted upon their daily ride, although the morn opened with a thunder storm, and the rain came down at intervals in torrents. Ellersly remonstrated, but she laughed, saying, "We are soldiers, you know, and must not be cowed by a little rain."

They started, followed by Corporal Bang, and after an hour's riding gained the summit of the mountain, along which the road ran for a mile or more comparatively level, and then she cried: "Now for my last race," and started on the run. Bob followed as well as he could, and while lumbering along, the girl rapidly gaining upon him, he remembered that at the end of a mile the road sloped down gradually to the river, and he also remembered a gully, along which ran a path dangerous for a horse, but that cut off half the distance to the point where the main road touched the stream. Instinctively he plunged down the deep declivity. Fortunately his horse, though slow, was sure-footed, and in a few minutes he gained the bank. He gained this just in time to see his fair fugitive enter a light boat and push into the stream. He was below the point she debarked, and saw before she could get hold of the oars that the boat, caught in the swift stream, was floating down to where a large tree, nearly level with the water, leaned over the stream. She would pass under this, and running out he swung down, catching a limb with his knee, and caught the skiff with his right hand. At that instant the sharp crack of a rifle rung out from the opposite shore, and Bob fell wounded into the boat.

His weight nearly upset the frail craft, but it righted, whirled around, and the next instant the girl pulled it to the shore. Leaping to the bank she beached the boat half its length, and then reaching to him said:

"Are you much hurt?"

"I believe so," he answered, as, half crawling, he worked his way out and fell upon the ground. A second shot from the same quarter struck the ground within an inch of his body.

"The cowardly miscreant," she said, throwing herself upon him. "If he kills you, he must kill me."

Poor Bob gave a grateful look and a weak smile in return for this act of devotion. At that instant the clatter of a horse's hoofs were heard upon the pike. Corporal Bang appeared. Taking in the situation at a glance he dismounted, pushed the girl one side, and picking up Ellersly as he would a child, carried him round the bend of the road, that made a shelter from further shots. Placing the Lieutenant timidly upon the grass he asked:

"Are you hit bad, Lieutenant?"

"Bad enough, Corporal," he gasped, and then added, "water."

Clara started hurriedly to the river. As she approached the brink she took the beautiful little leather sack Bob had so often eyed suspiciously from her belt, opened it, drew out a package of papers, threw them into the stream, and then stooping, filled the sack with water. When she returned Bang was cutting the blouse from the boy's shoulder, exhibiting a wound not larger than a pea, from which the blood spurted like a fountain. At the sight the girl nearly fainted, but rallying, administered the draught to his eager lips.

Again the girl hurried away. Throwing off her riding dress she took her linen underskirt, tore it into strips, and, without waiting to put on her dress, handed them to Bang, and then assisted him in binding up the wound. She presented a strange sight to the two men, in her short skirt, for the collar and linen cover were displaced, and the white column of neck and snowy precipice of shoulder were exposed. She did not seem to be aware of her exposure, and started, blushing crimson, when Bang said:

"Now, miss, git on your toggery and sit here while I go for an ambulance. Give him a sip of this times along," he continued, handing her his canteen that seemed full of commissary whisky. Catching Chancellor, as the best horse of the three, he mounted, without waiting to change saddles, and rode off at a gallop.

The girl, once more in her riding habit, seated herself, and putting her arms about the wounded man drew his head upon her shoulder, like a little mother, all care and tenderness. The storm had passed, the sun came out above the mountains, warm and bright, and the mocking bird, in the cedars near, poured out its flood of joyous melody. The poor boy's passion found utterance at last, and, in words made eloquent by gasps and pauses, he told his love. She listened in silence, responding only in tighter grasps and sobs she could not repress.

Her heart, in a strange agony of grief, was communing with itself. She found in this sad event a revelation and a revolution in one. How different was this declaration from the one she had courted and intended playing upon. And up through the new-found love in her heart came the cry, "You have murdered him."

A long silence followed, and Bob, feeling the hot tears falling on his brow, tried to smother down the groans the fierce pain wrung from him, and looked up with an expression of loving tenderness no words could express. She saw his increased paleness, heard his shortened breathings, and clasping him to her she said:

"Oh! Mr. Ellersly—Oh! Bob, don't die. It is killing me."

Vain appeal! Death's higher claim was closing in upon his heart. He gave one more look, shut his eyes, a shudder quivered through his frame, then all was still.

The sun glimmered brightly on the wet laurel leaves, the mocking bird sang in the cedar near, and the great world rolled on in endless life, as it ever does, regardless of the comedies and tragedies we mortals enact.

The driver and escort of the ambulance, hurrying down the road, heard as they turned the bend only the low wail of a broken-hearted woman. For once a funeral procession had only its real mourners, for Bang, as brave a man as ever stood unmoved under fire, wept as a child.

Twenty years after, business called me to this part of the Shenandoah valley, and I not only breakfasted at the old stone inn, but I visited the rude burying ground to look on Bob Ellersly's last resting place. As I entered I saw a carriage at the old gateway with a colored driver in livery, and inside I met a slender gray-haired woman coming from the graves. I caught only a glimpse of a pale, hollow-cheeked mourner, as she passed me.

I found the sexton busy digging a grave for a new occupant, and asking him to show me that of the Union officer he clambered out and led the way. To my surprise I was shown a handsome monument of marble, consisting of a pedestal and broken column. I was the more amazed to find it garnished with rare flowers, and inscribed on the base I read:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF ROBERT ELLERSLY, U. S. A., WHO FELL
FIGHTING FOR HIS FLAG AND COUNTRY
11TH OF AUGUST, 1862.

"Why, who erected this monument?" I asked.

"Thar's whar you git me," responded the sexton, "for I don't know. It come up from Baltimore ready made and we was ordered to put it up. That's all."

"Well, who strewed these flowers?"

"Same as afore—don't know. Every Decoration Day, as they calls it, that female critter turns up, strews an' cries, an' then vamooses. An' I must say, cries as much now as at fust."

For fear my readers will think me guilty of a wild exaggeration, let me call their attention to the fact that a woman will carry a dead lover in her heart for twenty years, when she is sure to quarrel with a live one within six months.

DONN PIATT.

MAC-O-CHEEK, O., May 27.

A writer on birds says: With most species family ties are not broken in winter. Blue birds, perhaps more so than most of our birds, maintain a strict family relation during the winter, even while assembling in large flocks. Not only do the partners remain true to each other during their lives, but they continue their care over the young throughout the first fall and winter.